

Everard Benjamin House  
(Hobart B. Bigelow House)  
232 Bradley Street  
New Haven County  
New Haven, Connecticut

HABS No. CONN-286  
HABS  
CONN  
5-NEWHA  
34-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
801 19th Street, N. W.  
Washington, D. C.

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. CONN-286

EVERARD BENJAMIN HOUSE  
(HOBART B. BIGELOW HOUSE)HABS  
CONN.  
5. NEWHA  
34-

Location: New Haven, New Haven County, Connecticut  
232 Bradley Street (southwest corner of Lincoln  
and Bradley)

Present Owner: Mrs. Frederick H. Wiggin

Present Occupant: Mrs. Ruth P. Wiggin

Present Use: Residence

Statement of  
Significance: Two story, three bay Greek Revival house attributed  
to lthiel Town. It is a rare example of a cross-  
shaped Greek Revival house built on a small scale.  
Former residence of Hobart B. Bigelow, 32nd Governor  
of Connecticut.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land upon which the house was built, taken from the New Haven Land Records for the City of New Haven.

August 27, 1838 William Johnson to Everard Benjamin  
"...a certain lot of land situated in  
the said City of New Haven, bounded on  
Orange Street ninety-seven feet, Westerly  
on Clinton Place ninety-seven feet, Northerly  
on Third Street two hundred and twenty four  
feet more or less and Southerly by land of  
the aforesaid Wm. Johnson two hundred and  
twenty-four feet more or less." 27 August  
1838, John Scarritt, Town Clerk. \$1300.00.  
Vol. 96, p. 349.

This deed is followed by many mortgages  
which indicate building in progress.

Everard Benjamin to William Johnson  
"...And whereas the said Johnson has also  
agreed to advance me the further sum of  
thirteen hundred and fifty dollars in such  
sums and at such times I shall need for  
the erection of a dwelling house on the  
land herein described..." 27 August 1838  
John Scarritt, Town Clerk. Vol. 97, p. 132.

June 10, 1845

Everard Benjamin to Lewis B. Judson  
"...do give grant bargain sell and confirm  
unto the said Judson one piece or parcel  
of land...with the buildings thereon stand-  
ing...(description as above)...Possession  
of the aforesaid premises to be given on  
the 15th day of September 1845..." \$6000.  
12 June 1845, Alfred Terry, Town Clerk.  
Vol. 115, p. 186.

Nov. 7, 1859

Certification. "This certifies that on  
the 28th day of April 1857 Lewis B. Judson  
of New Haven executed a mortgage deed to  
Russell Chapman of said New Haven...All  
right title and interest under said mort-  
gage is now vested in the undersigned as  
said mortgage. 11 November 1859,  
Sylvanus Butler, Clerk, s/ Russell Chapman.  
Vol. 180, p. 483.

March 14, 1863

Russell Chapman to Hobart B. Bigelow.  
"...a certain piece or parcel of land  
situate in said City of New Haven and  
bounded as follows to wit Easterly by  
Orange Street about sixty feet, Northerly  
by my own land about two hundred and twenty  
four feet, Westerly by Clinton Place about  
sixty feet, and Southerly by land of David  
Scranton about two hundred and twenty four  
feet..." 14 march 1863, M. K. Leonard,  
Town Clerk. Vol. 199, p. 408. \$4800.

May 20, 1863

Russell Chapman to Eleanor L. Bigelow.  
"...a certain piece or parcel of land with  
all the buildings thereon situate in said  
City and bounded Easterly by Orange Street  
ninety-one feet, Northerly by Bradley  
Street two hundred and twenty four feet  
more or less, Westerly by Clinton Place  
ninety-one feet, and Southerly by land of  
Hobart B. Bigelow (husband of Eleanor L.  
Bigelow) two hundred and twenty-four feet  
more or less...said land is subject to a  
mortgage to the New Haven Savings Bank for  
four thousand dollars..." 20 May 1863,  
M. L. Leonard, Town Clerk. \$4190 plus  
\$4000. Vol. 202, p. 60.

July 1, 1868

Hobart B. Bigelow and Eleanor L. Bigelow (wife)  
to Andrew J. Ramsdell "...a certain piece  
of land with the buildings thereon situated

in said City and bounded easterly by Orange Street about eighty six feet, southerly by land of Nancy Barnes about two hundred and twenty four feet, westerly about eighty six feet by Clinton Place and northerly about two hundred and twenty four feet by Bradley Street..." 3 July 1868, M. L. Leonard, Town Clerk. \$18,000 plus \$4,000. Vol 233, p. 383.

At this point the house was moved from the southwest corner of Bradley and Orange Street to the site at the corner of Bradley and Lincoln, alias Clinton Place.

- October 1, 1868 Andrew J. Ramsdell to Rev. Edward O. Dunning "...North by Bradley Street, so-called, one hundred feet; East by Clinton Place so-called by fifty one feet more or less; South by land of David P. Calhoun one hundred feet, and West by my own land, forty eight feet more or less, with the building thereon...free from all incumbrances whatsoever except a mortgage in favor of the New Haven Savings Bank for Three thousand Dollars, which is assumed by said Dunning as a part of the consideration of this deed." 3 October 1868, Milton L. Leonard, Town Clerk. \$6,000 plus \$3,000. Vol. 236, p. 268.
- May 2, 1904 Catherine Dunning Est. to Louisa S. Graves. (description of same land as above. 2 May 1904. Frederick H. Brethauer, Town Clerk. \$4,301. Vol. 565, p. 376.
- April 30, 1919 Louisa S. Graves to Ruth P. Wiggin. (same land as above). 30 April 1919, Donald Willcox, Not. Pub. \$7.50 in Fed Stamp Affix. (i.e. valued at \$7500). One Oollar. Vol. 843, p. 370.

The lot which is now 458 Orange Street, where the Hotchkiss estate was lately situated, was comprised of lots number 54, 55, 56, 38, 39, and 40 on the Franklin and Jenkins map of 1836, and is bounded as follows: N. 221.8 feet on Bradley Street (at the time called Third Street); E. 74.2 feet on Orange Street; W. 75.0 feet on Lincoln Street (at the time called Clinton Place).

Present Site: Originally lots 63 and 64 on the Franklin and Jenkins map, bounded as follows: N. 105.4 feet on Bradley Street; E. 51.0 feet on Lincoln Street, then called Clinton Place.

Third Street became Bradley Street in the 1830's. Clinton Place was renamed Lincoln Street in 1870.

2. Date of erection: c. 1840.
  3. Architect: Attributed to Ithiel Town, 1784-1844.
  4. Original plans, construction, etc.: The house was moved in the 1860's from its location at the southwest corner of Bradley and Orange Street to the southwest corner of Lincoln and Bradley.
  5. Alterations and additions: Addition of kitchen on the west about 1868. The present dining room occupies former kitchen space. Screened porch incorporated into columned porch on southeast corner of house is relatively modern.
  6. Important old views: none.
- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: Hobart B. Bigelow is recorded in the New Haven Directories of the 1850's as a Machinist. By the time he owned the Benjamin House (when it stood on the corner of Orange and Bradley Streets), he had become the president of his firm and by 1879 he was Mayor of New Haven. Three years later he was Governor of Connecticut.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources: Arnold G. Dana, unpublished scrapbooks in the archives of the New Haven Colony Historical Society, 114 Whitney Ave., New Haven, Conn. (New Haven Old and New).
2. Secondary and published sources: The New Haven City Directory, 1840-1952, (copies in Yale Library, Public Library Town Clerk's office, and the New Haven Colony Historical Society library).

The New Haven Land Records Office Archives, in the Land Records Office, Hall of Records for the City of New Haven, Orange Street, New Haven, Conn. Referred to by number of volume and page, e. g. 333.444: Vol. 333, p. 444.

"Map of 18 Valuable Lots in the City of New Haven for sale by Franklin and Jenkins," dated Thursday, January 21, 1836, located in the Town Clerk's office, Hall of Records, Orange Street, New Haven, Conn.

Prepared by Jonathan B. Conant  
Research Assistant  
National Park Service  
August 31, 1964

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This is a rare example of a cruciform Greek Revival house on a small scale which, despite an extension on the rear, has retained the basic original shape.
2. Condition of fabric: Good; well maintained.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: This two story, three bay house measures approximately 38'-1/2" x 80'-6" overall, including porch.
2. Foundations: Stone and brick.
3. Wall construction: Wooden frame with clapboard siding painted gray.
4. Porches, stoops, etc.: A continuous porch with Ionic wooden columns continues from front of house around the projecting wing.
5. Chimneys: Five brick chimneys. In the basement the brickwork is corbeled out into a half vault to support the hearths on the first floor above.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Main (east) doorway is wooden with eight lights and simple molded trim.
  - b. Windows and shutters: Main window on east wall axis is floor length casement flanked by side lights which slide into wall pockets. Other windows on first floor are floor length 6/9 d/h with louvered shutters. Second floor windows are 6-light vertical siding disappearing into pockets at head.
7. Roof:
  - a. Shape: Flat hipped roof.
  - b. Cornice, eaves: Plain cornice with wide overhang.
  - c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: None.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: overall cruciform shape with equal arms except at rear (west) which has been extended for existing kitchen; main entrance door is on east wall of the northerly arm. On the opposite wall of this entrance hall is a door leading to the music room. In the left corner of the entrance hall is an enclosed stairway leading upwards. Next to it is a doorway leading to the main front room which projects out to the east to form the eastern arm of the cross. An adjacent small study balances the composition by forming the front part of the south arm of the cross. A door from the study leads to a large room which was probably the dining room. This room and the music room are equal and in line, being separated by double doors which fold back to form panels in the thick wall. The western arm of the cross contained the kitchen with its large fireplace and brick oven. A rear enclosed stairway is situated between this kitchen and the dining room-music room block. The existing rear doorway is located under the stairs as are the stairs to the basement. West of the kitchen, which is presently the dining room, is an addition containing the existing pantry.
  - b. Second floor: There are three bedrooms situated over the parlor, music room and dining room. There is no second floor over the western arm of the cross.
2. Stairways: Main stairs; straight flight enclosed between two walls. The rear stairs are curved with winders and are completely enclosed.
  3. Flooring: hard wood.
  4. Walls and ceiling finish: painted plaster throughout with the exception of dining room in which wallpaper was used.
  5. Doorways and doors: Simple molded door trim. Each wooden door has double vertical panels.
  6. Decorative features and trim: Plain unmolded baseboards. Cornices are narrow with simple profile. The mantel shelf over the fireplace in the former kitchen is continued around the room as a plate rail.
  7. Notable hardware: Glass doorknobs are original.

8. Lighting: Modern electric fixtures.
9. Heating: Modern central heating supplemented with fireplaces; wooden mantel in the parlor, white marble mantels, c. 1845-60, in music room and former dining room; brick mantel in former kitchen. There are two original mantel-pieces in the upstairs rooms.

D. Site and surroundings:

1. General setting and orientation: House is located on the southwest corner of Bradley and Lincoln Place in a settled residential neighborhood.
2. Outbuildings: None.
3. Landscaping: Trees and shrubs; picket fence on the south.

Prepared by Woodrow W. Wilkins  
Supervisory Architect  
National Park Service  
July 1964

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as part of the Summer, 1964 New Haven Project, jointly undertaken by the HABS and the New Haven Preservation Trust, and financed by "Mission 66" funds of the National Park Service with assistance from the NHPT, following a 1963 HABS inventory survey of old New Haven carried out by the NHPT under the direction of Professor Christopher Tunnard of Yale University, President.

The project was under the direction of the Eastern Office of Design and Construction, James C. Massey, HABS Supervisory Architect, and was supervised by Architect Woodrow W. Wilkins, Professor of Architecture at the University of Kentucky, assisted by Ned Goode, Photographer, Frazier, Pennsylvania; Annette H. M. Gottschalk, William P. Hersey, and Charles R. Tichey, Student Assistant Architects and students at Carnegie Institute of Technology, Yale University, and Iowa State University, respectively; and Jonathan B. Conant, Research Assistant and student at Yale University.